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AN ACTUALLY PRACTISED
AND
EFFECTUALLY SUCCESSFUL
MODE OF TREATMENT
OF
THE CHOLERA.

TRANSLATED FROM A LETTER
OF
DR. EWERTZ,
PRACTITIONER, OF DÜNABURG, IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA;
ADDRESSED TO BARON E. F. VON GRAEFE,
BODY-SURGEON TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR A. SCHLOSS,
FOREIGN, MEDICAL, AND GENERAL BOOKSELLER,
103, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, CHARING CROSS.

M DCCC XXXI.

HARJETTE AND SAVILL, PRINTERS, 107, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

MODE OF TREATMENT
OF
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Dünaburg, July 16th, 1831.

SIR,

I TRUST you will excuse me, although not enjoying the honour of an acquaintance, in making known an empiric method of cure for the Cholera, here followed with great success, and which, perhaps, may be already known to you. But seeing, by the public prints, that in the neighbourhood of Dantzic, the proportion of fatal cases to those attacked has been very large, I hold it my duty to offer to your consideration, for the benefit of humanity, the simple, yet certain treatment used. If, Sir, were it even merely as a trial, and which from your situation will be easy, you will cause it to be put to the proof, you will speedily be convinced of its happy effects.

The Cholera, or Indian Vomit Dysentery, is neither so contagious nor malignant and obstinate as unfortunately, until now, the proportion of deaths to the cured cases appear to shew, if the favourable period for counteracting it be not allowed to pass unemployed. It becomes, however, fatal through the anxiety caused by the presence of the sick, which prevents the assistance necessary. During the execution of all the precautionary rules against the Cholera for the supposed case of seizure, that time in which alone the disease can be successfully combated, passes by unemployed and irrevocable. The rigorous separation from those in health must not be put into practice, while help must be tendered to the sick as quickly as possible, without any fear of contagion. For this purpose, there must be kept in readiness in every house, a quantity of spirits of camphor, with a tenth part of tincture of capsicum; also, half a pound of the leaves of peppermint, or curled-leaved mint, or of balm, or of elder flowers, or the like, and strong vinegar. Further, mustard flower, horse-radish, and blister plaister.

As soon as a person is seized with the known symptoms of Cholera—becoming giddy, falling down senseless, and the whole body, but especially the extremities, becoming cold and blue—he must be rubbed all over, and particularly on the extremities, and about the region of the heart, with

the above named spirits of camphor, until the senses return, and the body has regained its warmth throughout. In the meantime, a medical man must be sent for, who, having taken away sixteen to twenty-four ounces of blood, and the patient having regained his senses, a tea, made from one of the above-mentioned herbs, must be given quite hot, and as much of it drank as possible. At the same time, the body must not so much be wrapped up closely as rather covered over, leaving an interspace, through which, by pouring vinegar upon hot bricks or the like, the vapour may circulate and bring on perspiration. This may be assisted, likewise, by the application of hot flannels around the body itself. If these means have been used with due celerity and caution, and the perspiration has not been checked, the patient falls asleep, and is generally saved. If the disease first shewed itself with violent vomiting and diarrhœa, either contemporaneous or alternating with each other; or vomiting, or diarrhœa, alone, with violent continued pain about the heart, inextinguishable thirst, and spasmodic twitchings of the extremities; then is the rubbing with spirits of camphor not so necessary as the speedy production of perspiration, accompanied by venesection, and a blister, strewed with powdered cantharides, over the region of the heart. If the attack be not very severe, a blister, a mustard-flour poul-

tice, or scraped horse-radish, laid upon the heart and pit of the stomach, is sufficient to entirely remove it. This may be assisted with ten to twenty drops of laudanum in tea made of peppermint, or the like. In slight cases, where there is but little nausea or pain in the abdomen, a mixture of ten grains of bicarbonate of soda or potash and twenty grains of cream of tartar dissolved in water, of which a tea-spoonful is to be taken every hour, will be found sufficient. In every case have lavements of a decoction of linseed with a few drops of laudanum proved of service. The main point is, not to lose the least time, either in wishing to be convinced that the attack is the true East-Indian Cholera, or in removing the patient to a perhaps far distant hospital, but to proceed upon the aforementioned plan. If the first paroxysms have been successfully combated, any secondary symptoms may be treated with ease. Whoever has the least feeling of humanity can and may assist without the least personal danger ; for the author of this paper, who has had considerable experience of it, has the most perfect conviction that the disease is not contagious. He has had cases where, in a house inhabited by the lowest class, all the inmates were attacked in succession ; but, by means of the above remedies, were every one restored. In how great a degree successful and beneficial the above plan of cure was in this place, may be known from

the circumstance that from the first appearance of the Cholera, on the 9th of June, with a population hardly exceeding 5000 souls,—out of 745 sick, only 75 died. To these last, help was rendered too late, partly in consequence of personal concealment of the first symptoms, and partly from accidental circumstances. It is to be observed, that at least nine-tenths of all the cases here mentioned, who for the most part belonged to the lowest grade of society, were attended in their own dwellings ; or if taken ill in the street, were removed into the nearest house, where, without the least delay, the above-related plan was proceeded in. That, however, the disease was as malignant in this place as at any spot within the limits of Europe, is shewn by the fact that where, as above reported, help arrived too late, perfectly healthy individuals fell a sacrifice within, at most, the space of six hours ; while, on the contrary, it was often the case, that with speedily and properly applied aid, they could return to their usual occupations within a few hours after the attack.

The disease having begun to shew itself in the Prussian monarchy, the author hastens to impart his empiric plan of cure ; which, at least, in his place of residence, as shewn by the above proportion of fatal cases to those seized, has had a by far more happy result than the previous treatment

with large doses of calomel and opium, according to the English method. He would also again repeat, that the never-to-be-retrieved time has in no case a more important charge than in the treatment of a patient with Cholera, where the decision of life and death hangs on a moment delayed.

I have the honour, &c.

J. W. EWERTZ.